Guest Editors’ Introduction
Leora N. Rosen and Christine Hansen
VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN 2007; 13; 875
DOI: 10.1177/1077801207305216

The online version of this article can be found at:
http://vaw.sagepub.com

Published by:
SAGE Publications
http://www.sagepublications.com

Additional services and information for Violence Against Women can be found at:

Email Alerts: http://vaw.sagepub.com/cgi/alerts

Subscriptions: http://vaw.sagepub.com/subscriptions

Reprints: http://www.sagepub.com/journalsReprints.nav

Permissions: http://www.sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav

Citations (this article cites 6 articles hosted on the SAGE Journals Online and HighWire Press platforms):
http://vaw.sagepub.com/cgi/content/refs/13/9/875
Guest Editors’ Introduction

This special issue of Violence Against Women is the second of a two-part series on violence against women associated with the military. The focus of Part I (vol. 9, no. 9, September 2003) was on intimate partner violence among the ranks. The current issue presents groundbreaking research and analysis of sexual violence, including assault and trafficking, associated with armed forces.

Sexual violence against women in the military by their coworkers has garnered headlines over the years, often surpassing public attention relative to intimate partner violence. The case histories of active-duty women who have served their country with honor, braved danger, and demonstrated enormous courage only to be assaulted by their fellow service members have appalled the public, embarrassed the military, and prompted policy makers to demand change (Beth, 2004; Congressional Caucus for Women’s Issues, 2004; Department of Defense, 2003; Hansen, 2004a, 2004b; Laurie, 2004). A Department of Defense survey completed in 2002 concluded that sexual harassment and sexual assault within the past year had decreased significantly since the previous survey conducted in 1995 (Bastian, Lancaster, & Reist, 1996; Lipari & Lancaster, 2003). However, the number of reported cases dramatically increased during the same period (Department of the Army, 2004; Department of Defense, 2005; Joint Task Force on Sexual Assault Prevention and Response, 2005).

The theme of this issue concerns cultural norms, beliefs, and attitudes that influence harassing and assaultive behaviors toward women in the military. The study by Dawn Vogt, Tamara Bruce, Amy Street, and Jane Stafford examines attitudes toward women in the military and tolerance of sexual harassment among male and female Reservists and members of the National Guard. The study confirms the conclusions of earlier preliminary research (Rosen & Martin, 1998) that negative attitudes toward women in the military significantly predict tolerance of sexual harassment. Interestingly, the study found that sexual harassment training was associated with positive attitudes toward women, but not with decreased tolerance of sexual harassment, suggesting that units with positive attitudes may be more willing to promote training on sexual harassment. However, the training itself did not seem to affect individually held attitudes about sexual harassment.

Sexual harassment training cannot be effective when it contradicts other aspects of military culture including the status of women as sex objects. Furthermore, Part I in this series included a study showing a correlation between disrespect toward women

Editors’ Note: The views are those of the authors and do not purport to reflect the position of the National Institute of Justice, the U.S. Department of Justice, or the Miles Foundation.
when off duty (including visiting strip clubs) to increased intimate partner violence (Rosen, Kaminski, Moore-Parmley, Knudson, & Fancher, 2003). The “spillover” of these cultural practices may influence attitudes and behaviors in the workplace (Rosen et al., 2003). In the current issue we present evidence that the tolerance of this aspect of military culture leads to a demand for trafficked women that at the very least supports the trafficking industry.

The groundbreaking study conducted by Donna Hughes, Katherine Chon, and Derek Ellerman highlights the U.S. Armed Forces’ involvement in prostitution and the trafficking industry. Based on interviews with social service providers and law enforcement personnel, the study found that U.S. military bases in Korea form an international hub for trafficking of women for prostitution and sexual exploitation. The traffickers recruit and transport women to meet the demand largely created by U.S. military personnel and civilian men in South Korea and the United States. In some cases, U.S. servicemen are traffickers working with Asian organized crime networks.

Sexual assault is an underreported crime, a traumatizing event, and stigmatizing for victims. The assessment of the prevalence of sexual assault among U.S. Armed Forces personnel has been difficult to obtain because of varying methodologies and definitions in surveys conducted by the Department of Defense, the individual Services and the Veterans’ Health Administration (Hansen & Summers, 2005). The prevalence varies from 3% to 30% among the surveys (Department of Defense, 2004; Murdoch, Polusny, Hodges, & O’Brien, 2004; Sadler, Booth, Cook, & Doebbling, 2003). The different definitions of sexual assault and methods of collecting data used by military and civilian researchers pose additional obstacles to crafting a comparative analysis among civilian and military populations (Campbell et al., 2003; Hansen, 2004a). The study conducted by Deborah Bostock and James Daley highlights the importance of utilizing methods that permit the comparability of military and civilian data on sexual assault. The survey of Air Force women in 1996 applies the same methodology as that utilized in the National Women’s Survey (Kilpatrick, Edmunds, & Seymour, 1992). The results indicate that Air Force women are twice as likely as their civilian counterparts to have been raped. The majority of the rapes occurred during childhood and adolescence, prior to military service, and the perpetrators were mostly civilians. However, rapes occurring to these women after the age of 18 were increasingly perpetrated by service members. Furthermore, a past history of rape predicted later victimization.

The study by Leora Rosen focuses on rapes reported to civilian authorities and possible correlations with the presence of military personnel in the community. State-level data involving reported rapes were examined in relation to the proportion of military personnel in the state population, controlling for key demographic variables. The three-way correlation between the proportion of Air Force personnel in the state population, the proportion of Indians in the state population, and state rape rates is of particular interest. In a multivariate analysis, the proportion of Air Force personnel had a significant independent effect on state rape rates. The questions of
how or why the presence of Air Force personnel is related to rape rates are areas ripe for future research.

Finally, the Advocate/Activist Note by Kristen Houser provides a critique of the Department of Defense Care for Victims of Sexual Assault Task Force Report (CVSATF). This critique finds that the report neglects the role of the sex offender and focuses on rape reduction/avoidance—an approach that seeks to change victim behavior and may encourage victim-blaming—rather than rape prevention that attempts to change the behavior of offenders and would-be offenders.

Leora N. Rosen
National Institute of Justice
Christine Hansen
The Miles Foundation, Inc.

References


